LIFEBOAT

TAKING THE PROVERBIAL LONG WALK OFF A SHORT PIER WITH

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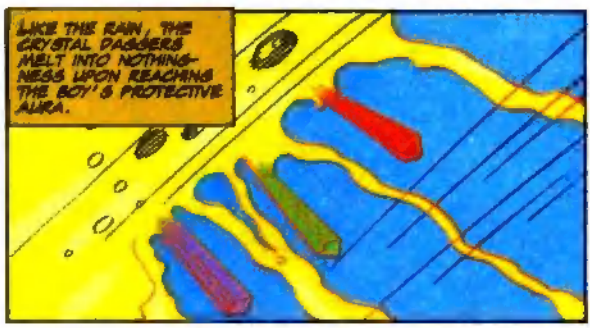
HALO CITY IS DROWNING, AND YOU, ITS MUTANT PROTECTORATE, STAND HELPLESS.
THIS STORM SIGNALS THE BEGINNING OF AN AGE OF GLOBAL CATASTROPHE.
YOU ARE WOEFULLY UNPREPARED TO LEAD MUTANTKIND THROUGH THE CHAOS TO COME.
AND THAT IS WHY I HAVE BROUGHT YOU THE SAVIOR OF HOMO SUPERIOR.
LET THE REIGN OF THE DARKSON BEGIN!!
LESS THAN A MONTH PAST, VULCANN THE BLOODSMITH STOLE A SIX MONTH CHILD--
--IN ORDER THAT HE MIGHT ACCELERATE THE INFANT'S GROWTH INTO MANHOOD--
--AT THE SAME TIME, ACTIVATING THE BOY'S ENORMOUS MUTANT TELEKINETIC ABILITIES.
NOW, THE CHILD TURNED MAN, CALLED THE DARKSON, USES ONLY A FRACTION OF THAT POWER--
--TO SUSPEND HIMSELF, THE BLOODSMITH, AND THE UNCONSCIOUS X-MAN, LUNA, IN MID-AIR--
--SURROUNDED BY A PSIONIC AURA THAT LEAVES THEM UNTOUCHED BY THE DOWNPOUR.

GIVE THEM THE GIRL... SHE'S NO LONGER A THREAT TO US--
--AND I'VE NO USE FOR ANY OF BRIMSTONE LOVE'S CURSED PROGENY.
YES, MY LORD.
THE DARKSON LOWERS LUNA TO THE GROUND, CRADLED IN A TELE-KINETIC CUSHION--
--A FAR MORE GENTLE USE OF HIS POWER THAN THE TK BLAST THAT LAID HER LOW.
LUNA!
...NNNNSSSHHH...
EASY, LUNA, IT'S ME, KRYSTALIN.
WHAT HAPPENED? WHY ISN'T TIM WITH YOU?
WHEN THE HALO TOWER BLEW UP--WENT TO INVESTIGATE--
--THOSE TWO RESPONSIBLE-- THE KID DIDN'T EVEN TOUCH ME... KNOCKED ME INTO A WALL...
--THEN THE PUNK KILLED TIM... BLEW HIM INTO A THOUSAND PIECES...
KRYSTALIN PORTER AND THE WILD WOMAN KNOWN AS LA LUNATICA HAVE NEVER BEEN CLOSE--
--BUT HER CONCERN FOR HER FALLEN TEAMMATE IS GENUINE--

--AND HER ANGER, EXPLOSIVE.
SHARDS OF CRYSTAL FORMED FROM MINERALS IN THE AIR FORM ARE KRYSTALIN'S TO COMMAND.
IF YOU MURDERED ONE OF THE X-MEN--
--I'LL MAKE YOU REGRET IT.

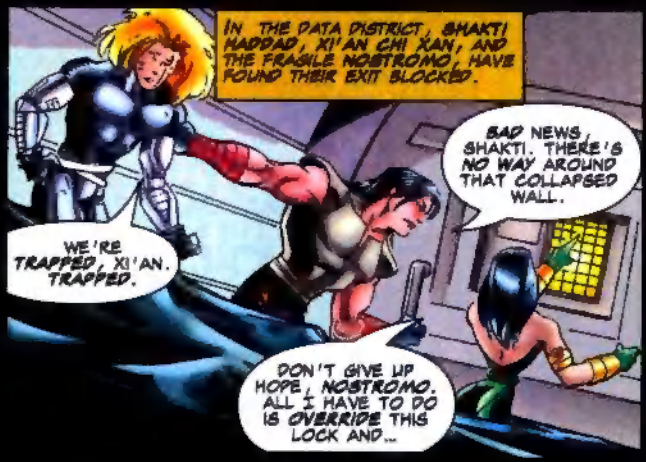
JOAQUIN, MY DARKSON, SHOW MS. PORTER THAT HER POINTED DISPLAY OF TEMPER IS A FUTILE GESTURE.
WHY DO THEY TRY TO HURT US? DON'T THEY KNOW BETTER?


LIKE THE RAIN, THE CRYSTAL DAGGERS MELT INTO NOTHINGNESS UPON REACHING THE BOY'S PROTECTIVE AURA.

KRYS, THAT KID'S GOTTA BE AT LEAST AN ALPHA LEVEL PSI.
THAT MAKES HIM AS POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS AS ZHAO.
THESE TWO ARE NOTHING BUT CARRION COME TO PREY ON THE WEAK--
--AND NO MORE ANYONE'S SALVATION THAN THE ARCHITECT WAS.
LIKE HIS PREDATORY NAMESAKE, BLOODHAWK TAKES TO THE AIR WITH SINGULAR PURPOSE--
I KNOW, AND I FEEL AS HELPLESS AS I DID AGAINST THAT PSYCHO-TELEPATH.
SHAM, YOU AND OLIVER GET LUNA TO SAFETY.
YOU'RE TOO CERTAIN THAT THIS ENY BELONGS TO YOU, BLOODHAWK.
PROVE HIM WRONG, JOAQUIN.

AAAUUGH!
LIKE A BIRD FLYING INTO A TEMPERED WINDOW PANE--
--BLOODHAWK IS STOPPED BY THE DARKSON'S FOCUSED PSIONIC BLAST.
C'MON, QUIVER, LET'S GET LUNA SOME HELP FAST--
--BECAUSE AT THE RATE THIS GUY'S TAKING OUT X-MEN, WE'RE GOING TO BE NEXT.
I THINK ITS TOO LATE FOR ALL OF US, SHAM.
IT'S TIME WE END THIS POINTLESS ALTERCATION, MY SON.
FINISH THEM OFF.
UNDER A BRUTAL TELEPATHIC ASSAULT, THE X-MEN AND THEIR FRIENDS FALL LIKE SO MANY BOWLING PINS.
BRAVO! YOU'VE DONE IMPRESSIVE WORK WITH THE BOY, BLOODSMITH.
HAVE YOU PARADED HIM BEFORE THE SHAPER'S GUILD YET? ESSEX IS SURE TO BE JEALOUS.
THE TRAGEDY OF THE MUTANT CALLED BOOK'S LIFE IS HIS BODY ISN'T ABLE TO SUPPORT ITS OWN WEIGHT.
IN NORMAL GRAVITY, HE IS CRIPPLED, REQUIRING A GYRO-CHAIR FOR MOBILITY.
HOW DO YOU KNOW ABOUT ESSEX AND THE GUILD?
HAVEN'T YOU HEARD? I'M HALO CITY'S MUTANT SAVANT.
I KNOW EVERYTHING.

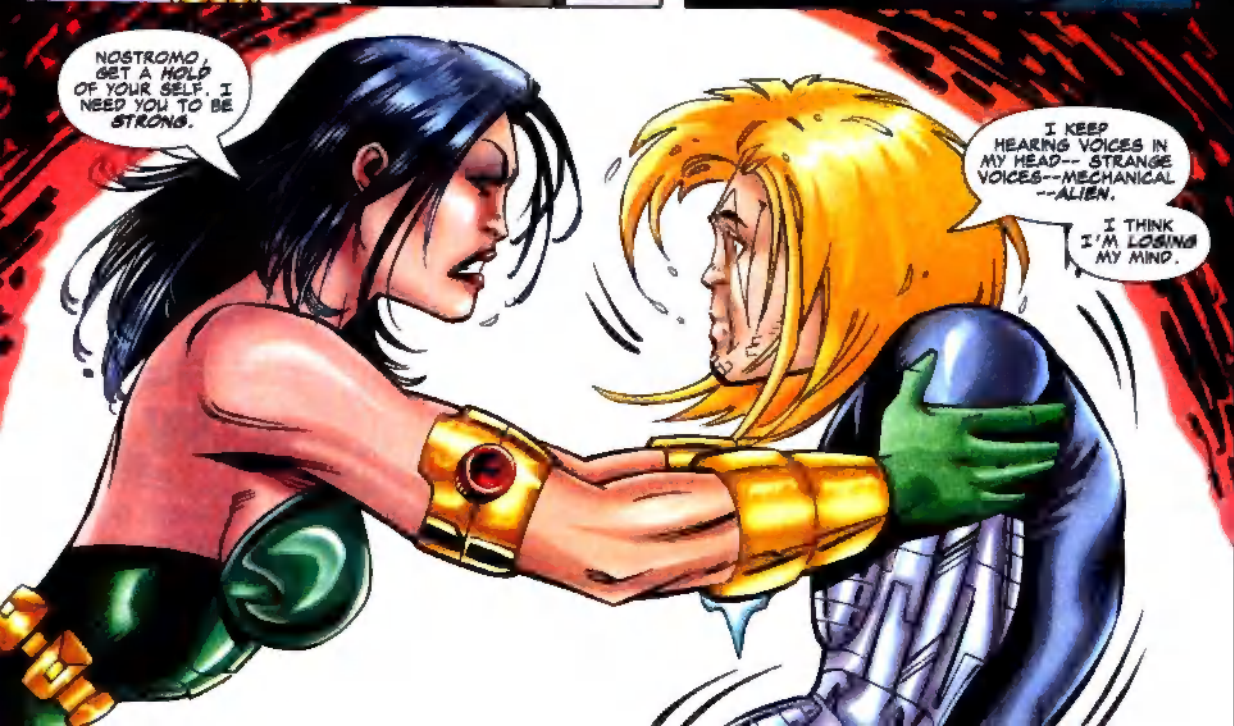
I'M TOLD THE X-MEN FREED YOU FROM CORPORATE SERVITUDE.
DO YOUR LOYALTIES STILL LIE WITH THEM?
THE X-MEN WERE SIMPLY THE MOST EFFICIENT MEANS TO BRING ME TO HALO CITY.
SOMEONE HAD TO SALVAGE ITS ARCHIVE BEFORE THE FLOOD DESTROYED ALL THAT DATA.
YOU ARE AWARE THAT JOAQUIM VASQUEZ, DESPITE ALL THAT YOU'VE MADE HIM, IS NOT THE SO-CALLED MUTANT MESSIAH.
PERHAPS NOT, BUT THE BOY WAS THE MOST MALLEABLE OF THE CANDIDATES.
AND WITH ELEMENTAL POWER LIKE HIS, IT DOESN'T REALLY MATTER--
--NOT AS LONG AS THAT POWER SERVES ME.
ABOVE THE CITY, A PULSATING MASS OF ENERGY COALESCES--
--SOMEHOW DRAWN TO THE CONFLICT BELOW.
SLOWLY, CONSCIOUS THOUGHT DAWNS WITHIN THIS ENERGY--
--A FRAGMENTED SENSE OF SELF THAT IS STARTLED AT THE PRESENCE OF ANOTHER CREATURE LIKE ITSELF.
YOU'RE CONFUSED.
PERHAPS IT WILL BE EASIER FOR YOU IF I ASSUME A FAMILIAR SHAPE--

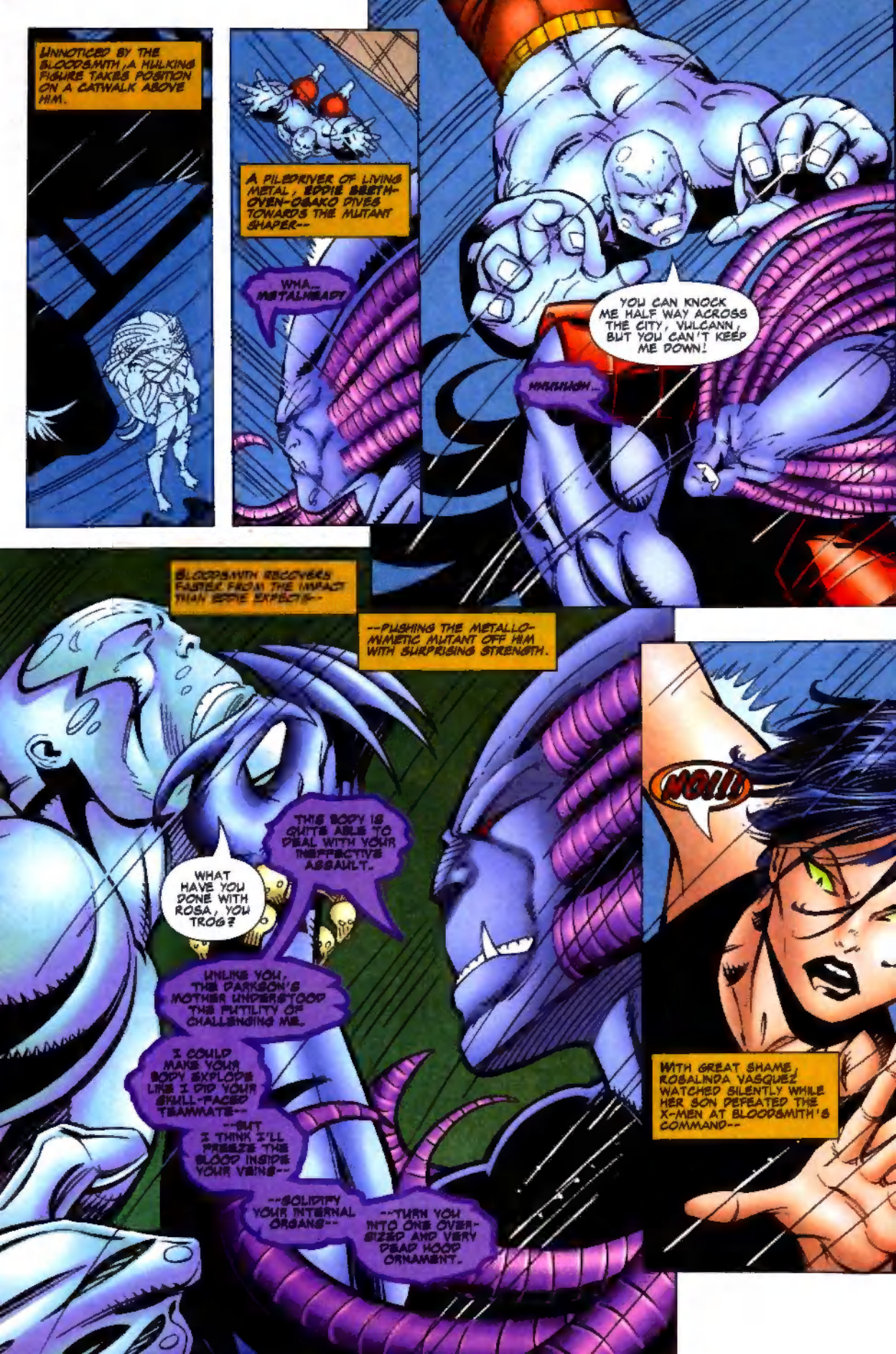

IN THE DATA DISTRICT, SHAKTI HADDAD, XI'AN CHI XAN, AND THE FRAGILE NOSTROMO, HAVE FOUND THEIR EXIT BLOCKED.
BAD NEWS, SHAKTI. THERE'S NO WAY AROUND THAT COLLAPSED WALL.
WE'RE TRAPPED, XI'AN. TRAPPED.
DON'T GIVE UP HOPE, NOSTROMO. ALL I HAVE TO DO IS OVERRIDE THIS LOCK AND...

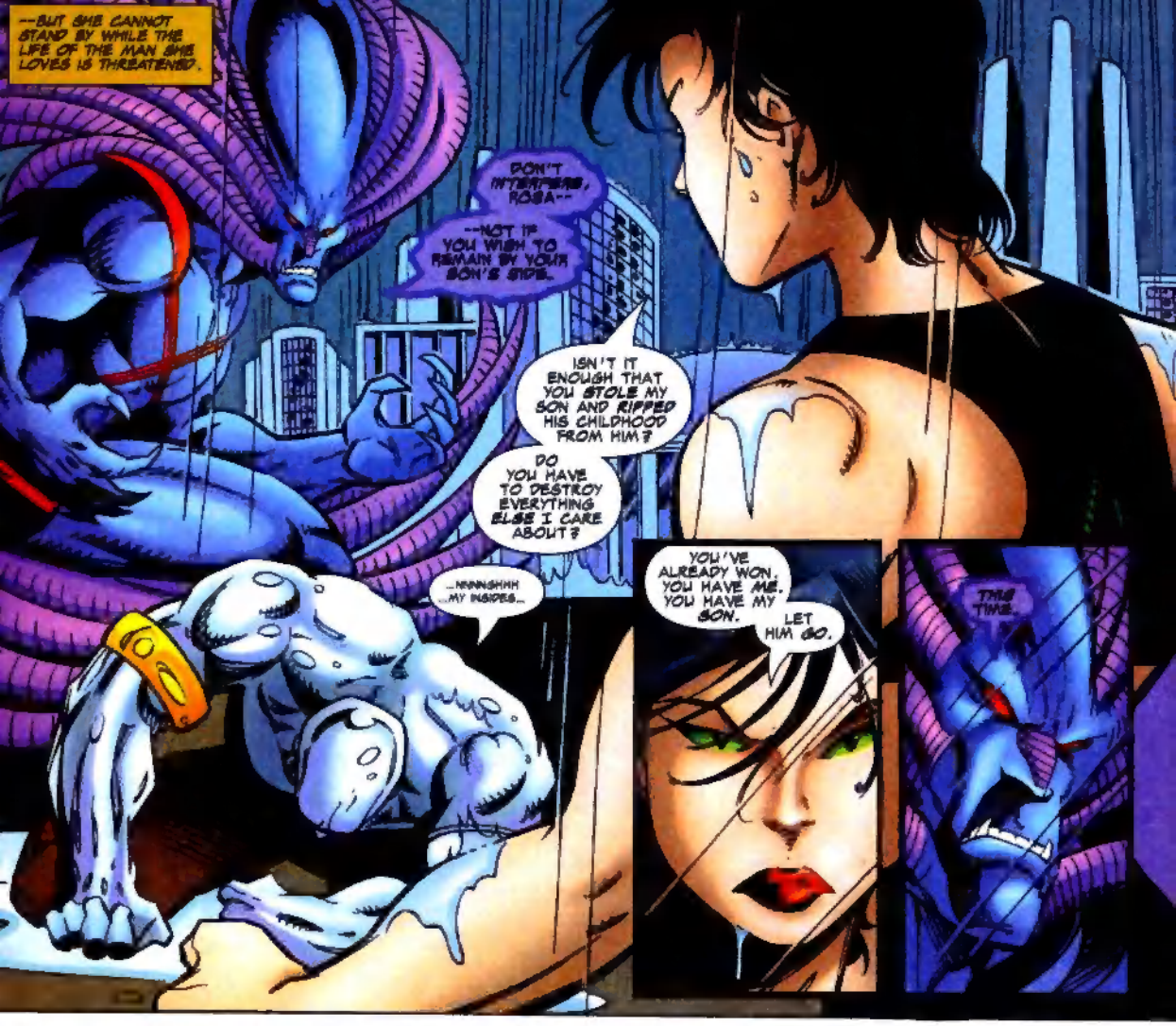
WHOA...
WHERE DOES THIS LEAD?
WOOOOSH
UNDER-GROUND. INTO THE CITY'S SERVICE TUNNELS.
SOME OF THE SYSTEM SHOULD BE WATERTIGHT.

SO LET'S TRY TO KEEP IT THAT WAY. WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO CLOSE THESE DOORS MANUALLY.
PUSH!
I'M CONCERNED ABOUT NOSTROMO, SHAKTI.

HE'S NOT HANDLING THE LOSS OF HIS TEAMMATES WELL.
NO-- LEAVE ME ALONE--
I WON'T DO IT--YOU CAN'T MAKE ME--
GET OUT OF MY HEAD!!!


NOSTROMO, GET A HOLD OF YOUR SELF. I NEED YOU TO BE STRONG.
I KEEP HEARING VOICES IN MY HEAD-- STRANGE VOICES--MECHANICAL --ALIEN.
I THINK I'M LOSING MY MIND.


UNNOTICED BY THE BLOODSMITH, A HULKING FIGURE TAKES POSITION ON A CATWALK ABOVE HIM.
A PILEDRIVER OF LIVING METAL, EDDIE BEETH-OVEN-OSAKO DIVES TOWARDS THE MUTANT SHAPER--
WHA... METALHEAD!
YOU CAN KNOCK ME HALF WAY ACROSS THE CITY, VULCANN, BUT YOU CAN'T KEEP ME DOWN!
HNNUUGH...
BLOODSMITH RECOVERS FASTER FROM THE IMPACT THAN EDDIE EXPECTS--
--PUSHING THE METALLO-MIMETIC MUTANT OFF HIM WITH SURPRISING STRENGTH.
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH ROSA, YOU TROG?
THIS BODY IS QUITE ABLE TO DEAL WITH YOUR INEFFECTIVE ASSAULT.
UNLIKE YOU, THE DARKSON'S MOTHER UNDERSTOOD THE FUTILITY OF CHALLENGING ME.
I COULD MAKE YOUR BODY EXPLODE LIKE I DID YOUR SKULL-FACED TEAMMATE--
--BUT I THINK I'LL FREEZE THE BLOOD INSIDE YOUR VEINS--
--SOLIDIFY YOUR INTERNAL ORGANS--
--TURN YOU INTO ONE OVER-SIZED AND VERY DEAD HOOD ORNAMENT.
NOU!
WITH GREAT SHAME, ROSALINDA VASQUEZ WATCHED SILENTLY WHILE HER SON DEFEATED THE X-MEN AT BLOODSMITH'S COMMAND--


--BUT SHE CANNOT STAND BY WHILE THE LIFE OF THE MAN SHE LOVES IS THREATENED.
DON'T INTERFERE, ROSA--
--NOT IF YOU WISH TO REMAIN BY YOUR SON'S SIDE.
ISN'T IT ENOUGH THAT YOU STOLE MY SON AND RIPPED HIS CHILDHOOD FROM HIM?
DO YOU HAVE TO DESTROY EVERYTHING ELSE I CARE ABOUT?
...NNNNGHHH ...MY INSIDES...
YOU'VE ALREADY WON. YOU HAVE ME. YOU HAVE MY SON.
LET HIM GO.
THIS TIME...

ROSA... HOW COULD YOU... AFTER WHAT HE DID TO JOAQUIM...
IT'S THE ONLY WAY. I CAN'T LOSE MY BABY A SECOND TIME.
I'M SO SORRY, EDDIE.

BLOODSMITH'S A KILLER. DON'T LET HIM MAKE JOAQUIM ONE TOOOO...

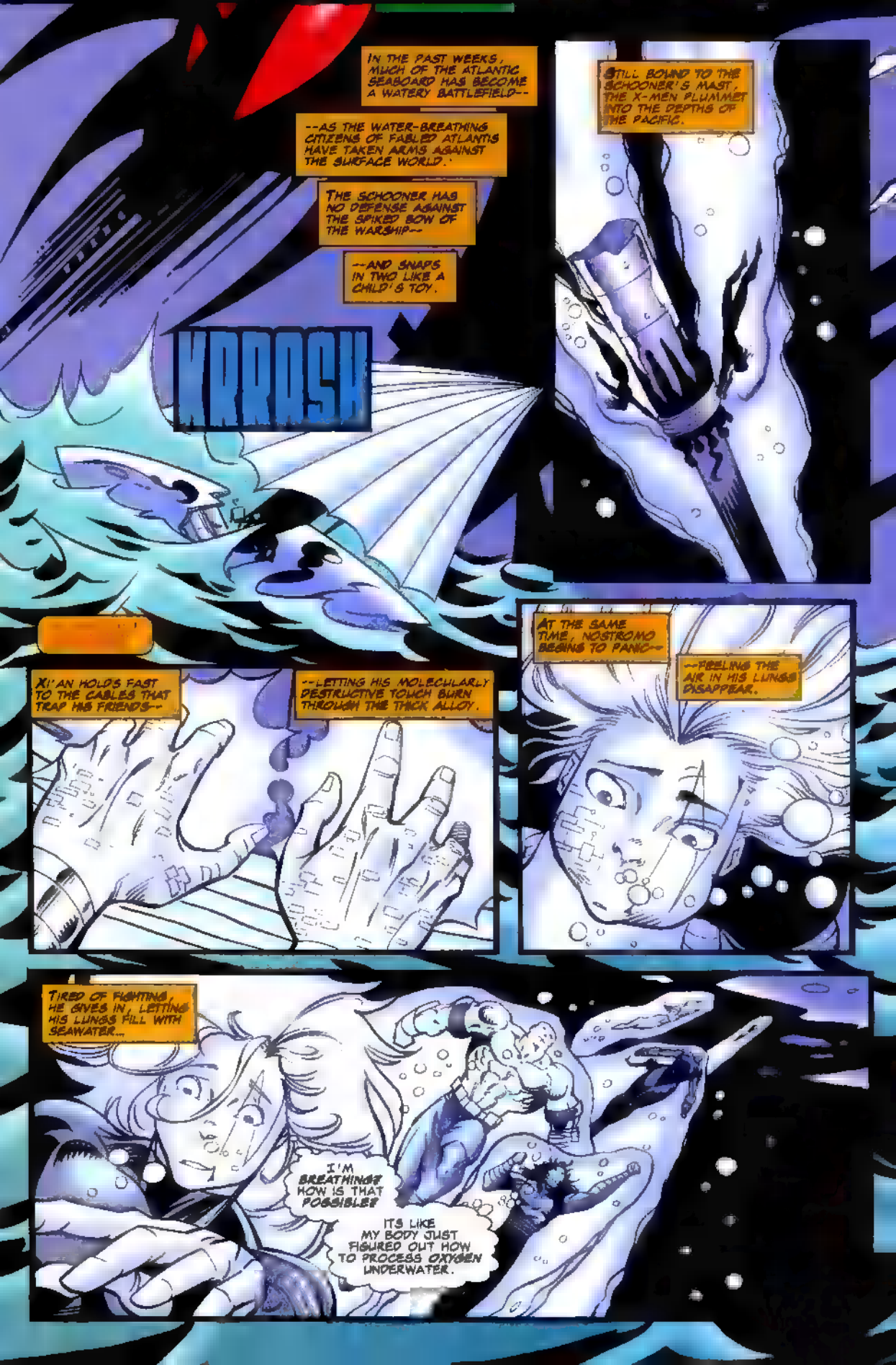
HE'S NOT DEAD, ONLY UNCONSCIOUS. WE'LL PUT HIM WITH THE REMAINING X-MEN.
I WILL GIVE THEM THE OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE THE DARKSON.
IF THEY'RE WISE, THEY WON'T REFUSE.
WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS?
BECAUSE MUTANTKIND'S SURVIVAL AND ASCENDANCY DEPENDS ON ME.
THE WORLD AS WE KNOW IT IS ENDING. GOVERNMENTS ARE COLLAPSING. CONTINENTS ARE BEING REDRAWN.
NOW IS THE TIME FOR THE PLANET'S SURVIVING MUTANT POPULACE TO UNITE--
--AND CLAIM THE WORLD OF TOMORROW.
AT YOUR DIRECTION, OF COURSE.
I CAN ENGINEER THE MUTANT ASCENDANCY, BUT I CANNOT LEAD IT.
THAT'S WHY I ACCELERATED YOUR SON'S GROWTH.
I DIDN'T HAVE SEVENTEEN YEARS TO WAIT FOR HIS ABILITIES TO MANIFEST.
SEE HOW HIS PSIONIC AURA OVERWHELMS THE HALO CITY REFUGEES BELOW HIS.
THEY'RE ALMOST HYPNOTIZED BY HIS PRESENCE.
WHEN THE TIME COMES, THEY'LL BE WILLING TO DIE FOR HIM IF HE ASKS.

FOR NOW, ALL WE ASK IS THAT THEY FOLLOW US NORTH TO HIGHER GROUND--
--TO MY FORTRESS IN THE HEART OF [redacted]
THERE WE WILL MOLD THE MUTANTS OF HALO CITY INTO AN ARMY FOR THE NEW WORLD.
HE'S INSANE.
MAYBE SO, KRYS, BUT THE FLOTILLA [redacted] TO BE [redacted] THIS BOAT'S LEAD.
SAY GOODBYE TO THE DREAM.
WILL THE LAST PEOPLE OUT OF HALO CITY PLEASE TURN OUT THE LIGHTS?

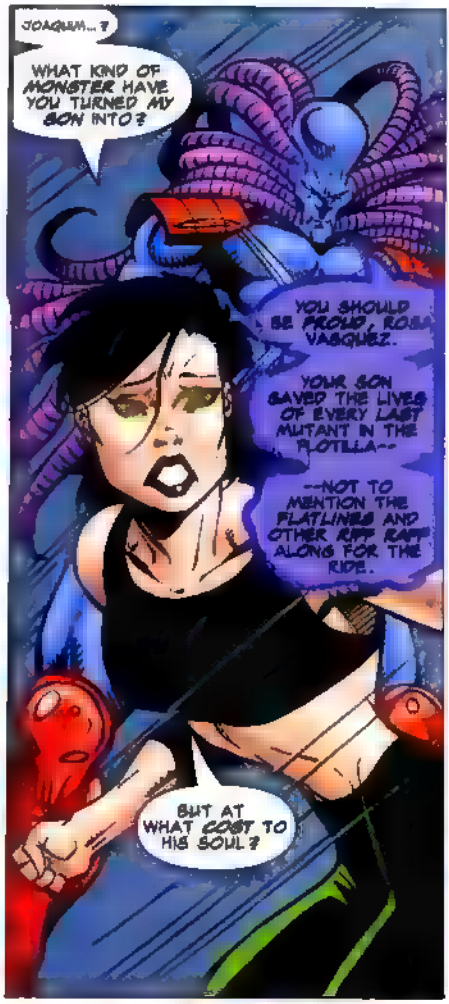
AR BENEATH THE WATER-LOGGED CITY.
WHERE ARE WE?
ONE OF DOOM'S SECRET LABS.
HE BROUGHT ME HERE TO TELL ME THE "MUTANT MESSIAH" WOULD BE MOST LIKELY ONE OF HALO CITY'S YOUNGER GENERATION.
AND THAT'S WHY YOU CAME TO THE SHELTER? BECAUSE THE EX-PRESIDENT MADE YOU?
YOU NEVER [redacted] ABOUT US AT ALL.
I WANTED TO TEACH YOU AND THE OTHERS HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELVES.
AND I FAILED.
BUT I'M [redacted] TO FAIL NOW. DOOM [redacted] ME THE ACCESS KEY TO THIS TELEPORTER.
ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS LOCATE THE OTHER X-MEN BY THE SIGNAL BEACONS IN THEIR BADGES--
--AND THEN WE'RE OUT OF HERE.
I DON'T LIKE THIS PLACE. SOMEONE ELSE IS [redacted] WITH US.
THERE'S NO ONE HERE.
NO, I FEEL IT, TOO-- LIKE SOMEONE I KNOW...
TIM?

DISORIENTED AND FRIGHTENED BY HIS REAWAKENING SENSE OF SELF—
--HE ROCKETS TOWARD THE RADIANT FIGURE PATIENTLY WAITING FOR HIM.
I KNOW WHO I AM. I'M TIMOTHY FITZGERALD
DOES THIS MEAN I'VE DIED A SECOND TIME?
YOU WERE NEVER DEAD.
YOU WERE UNAWARE THAT YOU WERE SLOWLY MUTATING INTO A BEING OF PURE AND LIVING ENERGY.
THAT'S WHY YOU ALONE OF ALL THE GRAVEROBBER'S UNDEAD MINIONS SURVIVED.
YOUR PHYSICAL BODY HAD BECOME BAGGAGE THAT YOU WERE HOLDING ONTO OUT OF HABIT.
THE CHARADE ENDED WHEN THE BLOODSMITH IRREVOCABLY DESTROYED YOUR EARTHLY BODY
REJOICE, LITTLE BROTHER, YOU'RE NO LONGER CONFINED BY PHYSICAL LIMITATIONS.
I THOUGHT YOU WERE MY DEAD GIRLFRIEND, BUT YOU'RE NOT REALLY REIKO, ARE YOU?
NO. IT WAS EASIER TO MAKE YOU BELIEVE THAT THE FIRST TIME YOU DISCONNECTED FROM YOUR BODY. I WOULD HAVE TOLD YOU THEN, BUT YOU WERE STILL TOO TIED TO THE MUNDANE WORLD.
THERE ARE OTHERS LIKE US, AND THEY'RE WAITING FOR YOU.
BUT MY FRIENDS... MY CITY...
LEAVE THEM BEHIND. YOUR DESTINY LIES ELSEWHERE.
*X-MEN 2099 #27

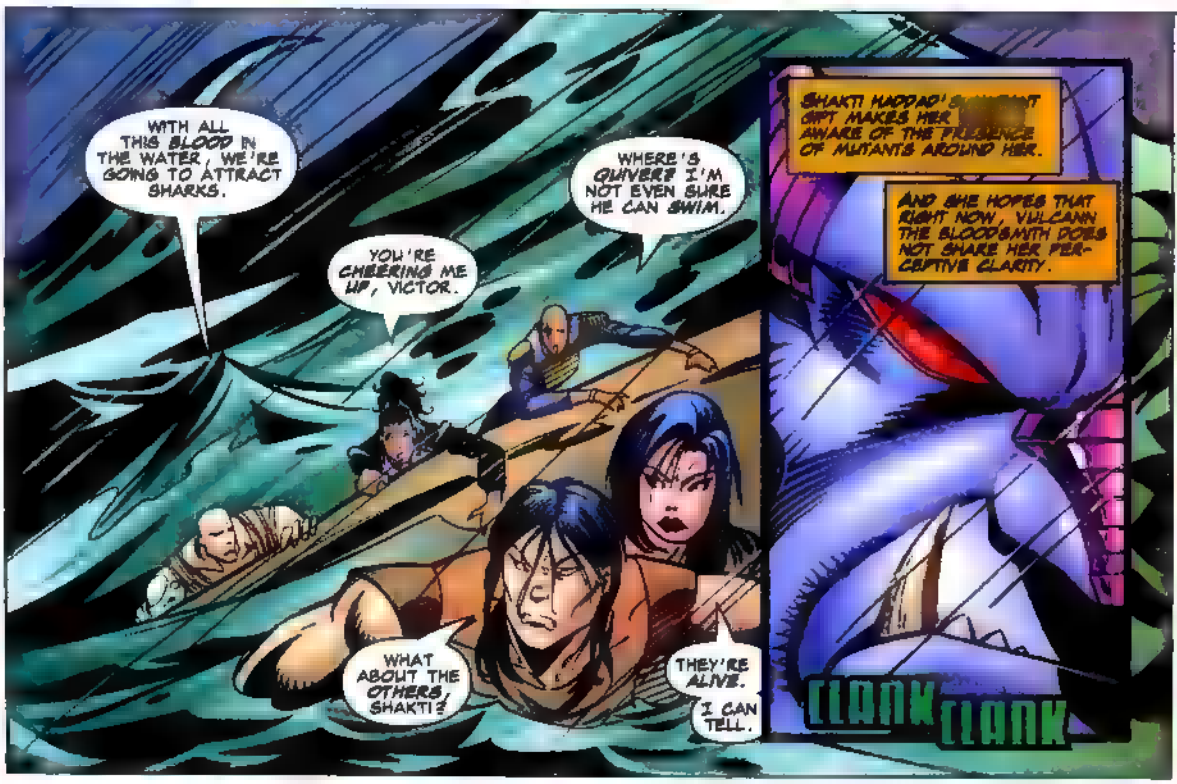
IN THE NEW PACIFIC CHANNEL, ABOARD A SOLAR POWERED SCHOONER--
--THE GLITTER OF A TELEPORTATION FIELD ANNOUNCES THE ARRIVAL OF THREE UNINVITED PASSENGERS.
UGH...I HATE TELEPORTING.
WE'VE FOUND THE X-MEN, BUT WHY ARE THEY TIED UP?
GLAD YOU GUYS MADE THE PARTY. I'M GETTING SEASICK.
UNTIE US, BOY.
HURRY, KID. BLOODSMITH'S BUSY INSPECTING THE REST OF THE FLOTILLA, BUT HE'LL BE BACK.
I'M TRYING, [redacted] THESE CABLES WON'T BUDGE.
ABOUT TIME YOU SHOWED UP, XI'AN. MAYBE YOU CAN USE THAT MAGIC TOUCH TO GET US OUT OF HERE.
I'LL DO WHAT I CAN. WHAT'S GOING ON?
NOTHING [redacted] WE GOT AMBUSHED BY AN UGLY MUTANT NAMED BLOODSMITH [redacted] HIS TELEKINETIC "TOOL"--
--WHO TURNS OUT TO BE THE GROWN UP VERSION OF ROSA'S BABY.
I HATE TO SAY THIS--
--BUT I THINK WE'VE GOT SOMETHING ELSE TO WORRY ABOUT RIGHT NOW.
AN ATLANTEAN WARSHIP!

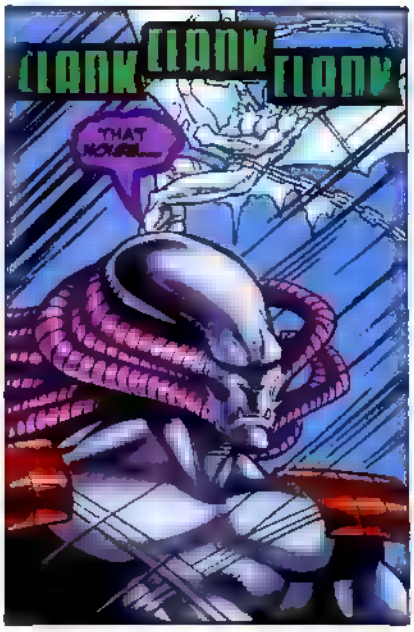

IN THE PAST WEEKS, MUCH OF THE ATLANTIC SEABOARD HAS BECOME A WATERY BATTLEFIELD--
--AS THE WATER-BREATHING CITIZENS OF FABLED ATLANTIS HAVE TAKEN ARMS AGAINST THE SURFACE WORLD.
THE SCHOONER HAS NO DEFENSE AGAINST THE SPIKED BOW OF THE WARSHIP--
--AND SNAPS IN TWO LIKE A CHILD'S TOY.
KRRASH
STILL BOUND TO THE SCHOONER'S MAST, THE X-MEN PLUMMET INTO THE DEPTHS OF THE PACIFIC.
AT THE SAME TIME, NOSTROMO BEGINS TO PANIC--
--FEELING THE AIR IN HIS LUNGS DISAPPEAR.
XI'AN HOLDS FAST TO THE CABLES THAT TRAP HIS FRIENDS--
--LETTING HIS MOLECULARLY DESTRUCTIVE TOUCH BURN THROUGH THE THICK ALLOY.
TIRED OF FIGHTING, HE GIVES IN, LETTING HIS LUNGS FILL WITH SEAWATER...
I'M BREATHING! HOW IS THAT POSSIBLE?
ITS LIKE MY BODY JUST FIGURED OUT HOW TO PROCESS OXYGEN UNDERWATER.

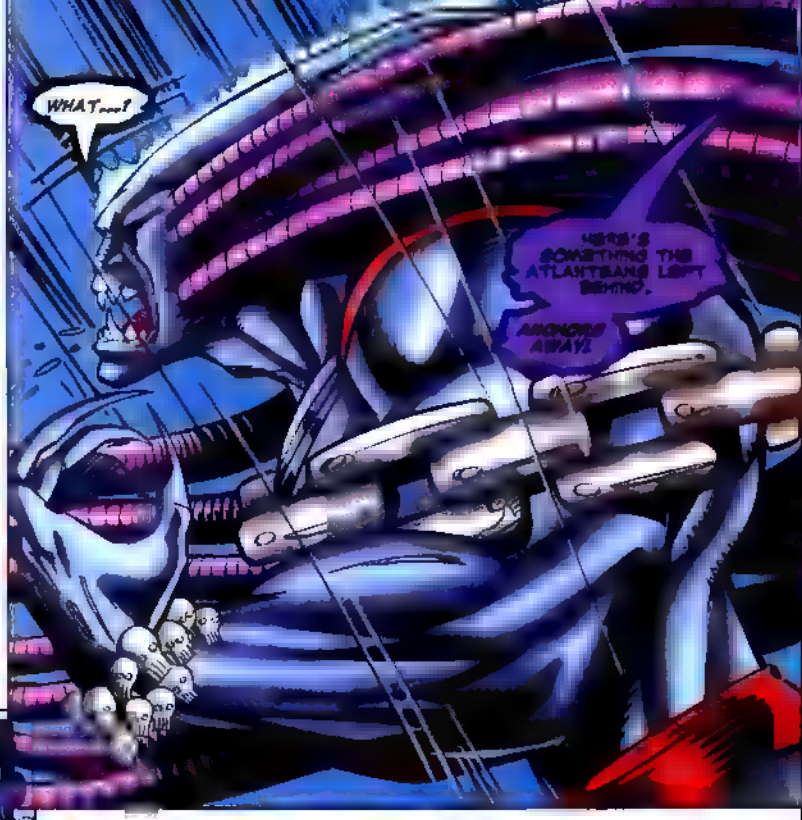
WE ARE WARRIORS OF ATLANTIS--
THE OCEANS BELONG TO US. YOUR PRESENCE ON THESE WAVES INSULTS AND OFFENDS US.
YOU WILL DIE HERE TODAY, SURFACE DWELLERS.
YOU'RE FAR TOO ARROGANT FOR SUCH A GENETICALLY STUNTED SPECIES.
YOUR PEOPLE ARE DYING BY DEGREES--UNABLE TO ADAPT TO THEIR CHANGING ENVIRONMENT.
AH, BUT THE ABILITY TO CHANGE IS A MUTANT'S TRUE STRENGTH.
ALLOW ME TO DEMONSTRATE.
IF I SEAL THE SKIN ABOUT YOUR MOUTH AND OVER THE GILLS BEHIND YOUR EARS--
--YOU WILL BE UNABLE TO BREATHE ABOVE OR BELOW WATER.
MMMRRRPHH...
JOAQUIM, THESE ATLANTEANS WOULD KILL YOUR NEWLY ACQUIRED FOLLOWERS.
I WON'T LET THEM HURT MY PEOPLE!
BOOM
A HURRICANE OF PSIONIC ENERGY HITS THE WARSHIP--
--RIPPING IT ASUNDER IN AN ELEMENTAL FURY.

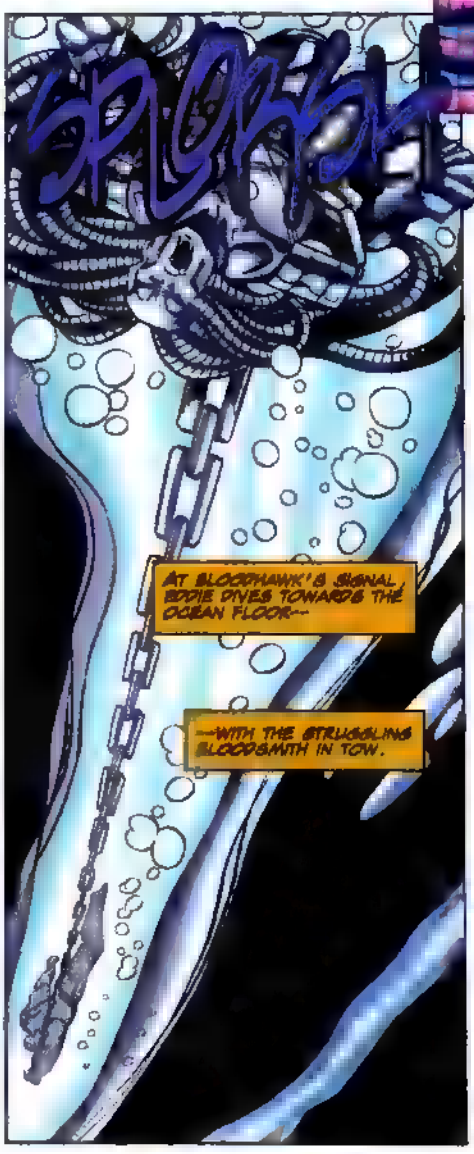

JOAQUIM...?
WHAT KIND OF MONSTER HAVE YOU TURNED MY SON INTO?
YOU SHOULD BE PROUD, ROSA VASQUEZ.
YOUR SON SAVED THE LIVES OF EVERY LAST MUTANT IN THE FLOTILLA--
--NOT TO MENTION THE FLATLINERS AND OTHER RIFF RAFF ALONG FOR THE RIDE.
BUT AT WHAT COST TO HIS SOUL?

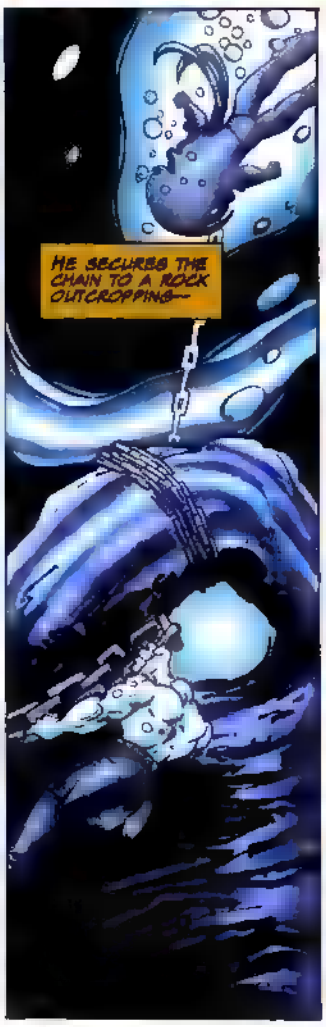
JUST BENEATH THE WATERS SURFACE, THE X-MEN FIND THEMSELVES SWIMMING AGAINST A TIDE OF BLOOD AND DEBRIS.

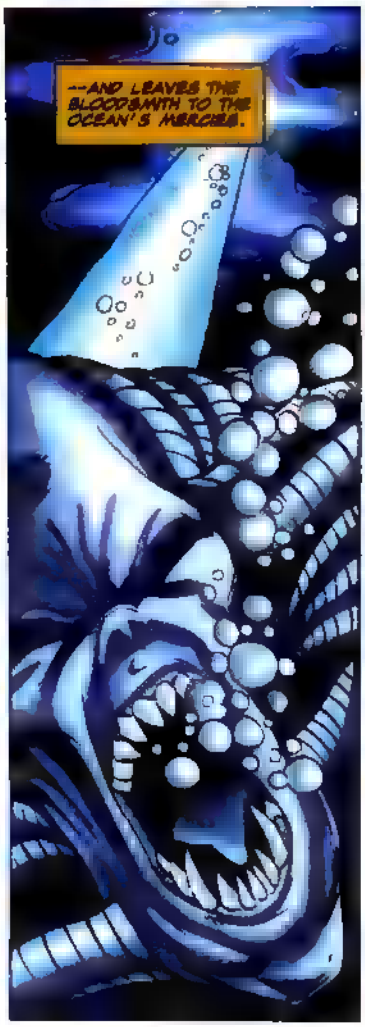

WITH ALL THIS BLOOD IN THE WATER, WE'RE GOING TO ATTRACT SHARKS.
YOU'RE CHEERING ME UP, VICTOR.
WHERE'S QUIVER? I'M NOT EVEN SURE HE CAN SWIM.
WHAT ABOUT THE OTHERS, SHAKTI?
THEY'RE ALIVE. I CAN TELL.
SHAKTI HADDAD'S [redacted] GIFT MAKES HER AWARE OF THE PRESENCE OF MUTANTS AROUND HER.
AND SHE HOPES THAT RIGHT NOW, VULCANN THE BLOODSMITH DOES NOT SHARE HER PERCEPTIVE CLARITY.
CLANK CLANK


CLANK CLANK CLANK
"THAT NOISE..."


WHAT...?
HERE'S SOMETHING THE ATLANTEANS LEFT BEHIND.
ANCHORS AWAY!

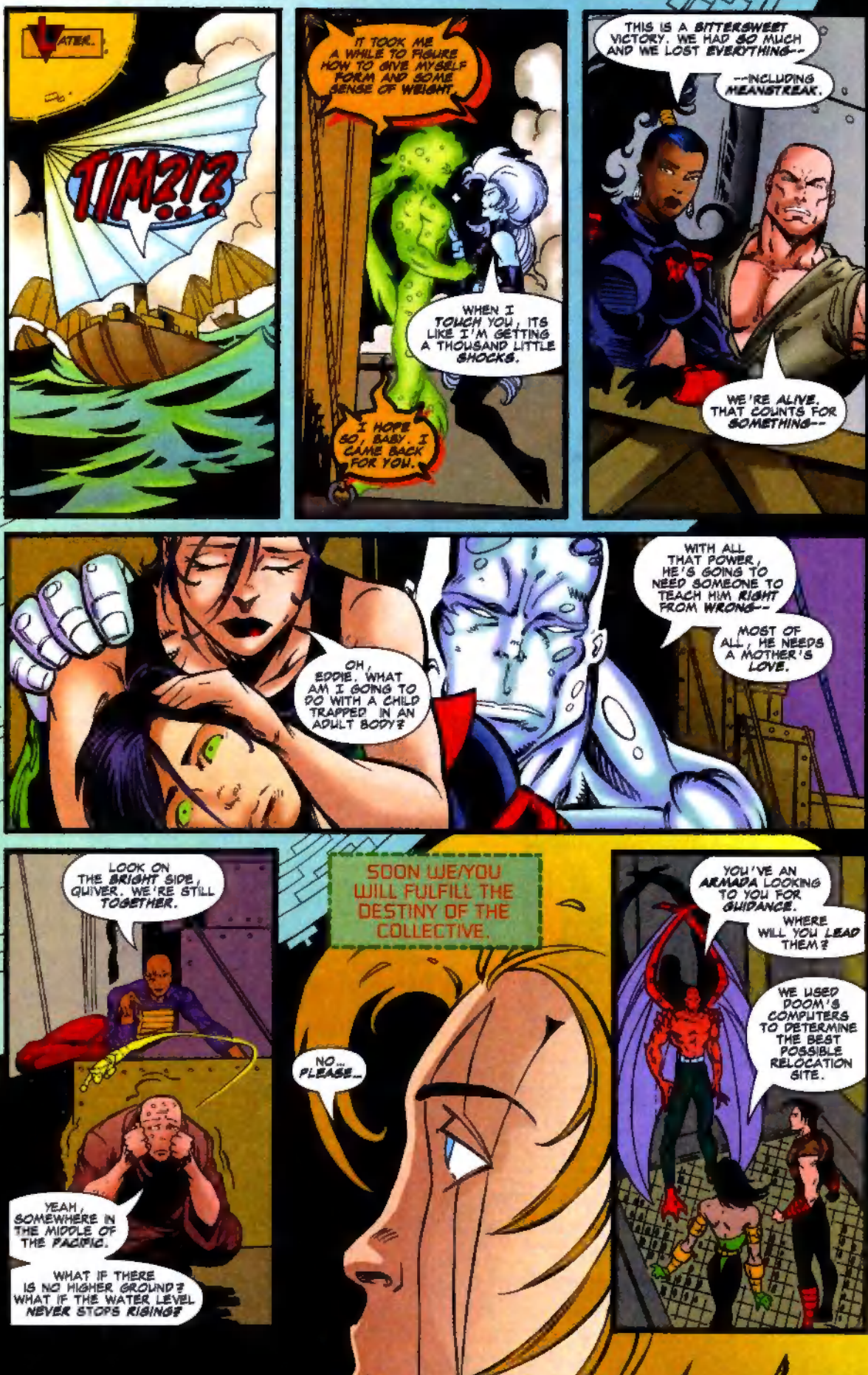

SPLASH
AT BLOODHAWK'S SIGNAL, EDDIE DIVES TOWARDS THE OCEAN FLOOR--
--WITH THE STRUGGLING BLOODSMITH IN TOW.


HE SECURES THE CHAIN TO A ROCK OUTCROPPING--


--AND LEAVES THE BLOODSMITH TO THE OCEAN'S MERCIES.

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO VULCANNE!?
WHERE IS HE?!?
WATER BEGINS TO CHURN VIOLENTLY AROUND THE DARKSON AS HE BECOMES THE EYE OF A RAPIDLY GROWING STORM.
AFTER PULLING THEMSELVES OUT OF THE TURBULENT WATERS--
--THE X-MEN FIND LITTLE SECURE FOOTING ABOARD A BOAT ROCKED BY THE DARKSON'S ANGRY PIT.
KID'S THROWING A MEAN TANTRUM.
UNDERSTANDABLY, HE'S A CHILD, AND WE JUST TOOK OUT HIS FATHER FIGURE.
A CHILD WITH PHENOMENALLY DESTRUCTIVE ABILITIES.
WE'RE FISH FOOD.
HE ONLY ACTED ON THE BLOODSMITH'S COMMAND. MAYBE I CAN REACH HIM.
JOAQUIM, STOP THIS, PLEASE. LISTEN TO ME, I'M YOUR MOTH--
SPLOOSH
WITHIN THE PSIONIC STORM AROUND THE DARKSON, ANOTHER KIND OF ENERGY CHARGES THE AIR.
IS THAT ANY WAY TO TREAT YOUR MOTHER?

MY MOTHER?
YOU KNOW THE WOMAN WHO GAVE BIRTH TO YOU?
THE WOMAN WHO HELD YOU IN HER ARMS AND ROCKED YOU TO SLEEP?
THE VOICE, A STATIC WHISPER, A WHITE NOISE HUM, IS ENTRANCING.
I... REMEMBER... A WOMAN...
YEAH, YOUR FRIEND THE BLOODSMITH STOLE YOU FROM YOUR MOTHER
VULCANN DID THIS?
THE PATTERNS OF LIGHT WITHIN THE HUMAN SILHOUETTE TRANSFIX THE BOY--
--AND HIS ANGER SLOWLY GIVES WAY TO RAPT FASCINATION.
VULCANN DID A LOT OF BAD THINGS. YOU'RE TOO YOUNG TO UNDERSTAND.
LIKE BLOWING UP MY BODY--
--WHICH, ALTHOUGH I DON'T NEED IT ANYMORE, HAD SENTIMENTAL VALUE.
I DON'T BLAME YOU. HE USED YOU.
AND THAT'S WHY I'M SORRY I HAVE TO DO THIS!
TAPPING INTO THE AMBIENT ENERGY OF THE STORM AROUND HIM--
--TIMOTHY FITZGERALD CHANNELS THE FORCE INTO JOAQUIM VASQUEZ--
--SHOCKING HIM INTO UNCONSCIOUSNESS.


ATER.
TIM?!?
IT TOOK ME A WHILE TO FIGURE HOW TO GIVE MYSELF FORM AND SOME SENSE OF WEIGHT.
WHEN I TOUCH YOU, ITS LIKE I'M GETTING A THOUSAND LITTLE SHOCKS.
I HOPE SO, BABY. I CAME BACK FOR YOU.
THIS IS A BITTERSWEET VICTORY. WE HAD SO MUCH AND WE LOST EVERYTHING--
--INCLUDING MEANSTREAK.
WE'RE ALIVE. THAT COUNTS FOR SOMETHING--
OH, EDDIE. WHAT AM I GOING TO DO WITH A CHILD TRAPPED IN AN ADULT BODY?
WITH ALL THAT POWER, HE'S GOING TO NEED SOMEONE TO TEACH HIM RIGHT FROM WRONG--
MOST OF ALL, HE NEEDS A MOTHER'S LOVE.
LOOK ON THE BRIGHT SIDE, QUIVER. WE'RE STILL TOGETHER.
YEAH, SOMEWHERE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE PACIFIC.
WHAT IF THERE IS NO HIGHER GROUND? WHAT IF THE WATER LEVEL NEVER STOPS RISING?
SOON WE/YOU WILL FULFILL THE DESTINY OF THE COLLECTIVE.
NO... PLEASE...
YOU'VE AN ARMADA LOOKING TO YOU FOR GUIDANCE.
WHERE WILL YOU LEAD THEM?
WE USED DOOM'S COMPUTERS TO DETERMINE THE BEST POSSIBLE RELOCATION SITE.

HEADS UP, X-MEN--
--WE'RE HEADED FOR THE SAVAGE LAND.
TO BE CONTINUED NEXT MONTH IN
2099: WORLD OF TOMORROW #1